

**Remarks/Arguments:**

Claims 17-23 and 27-39 are pending. Claims 27 and 36-39 have been allowed. Claims 17-20, 23, 28-33, and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 11284041 and further in view of GB 2,165,178.

Claim 17, as amended, includes features neither disclosed or suggested by the art of record, for example,

. . . coating at least a portion of an exterior  
surface of the tip portion with a polymer.

This feature is supported in the originally filed application at, for example, Fig. 2B. For example, as shown in Fig. 2B, the exterior surface (including the front end face of the tip portion) is coated with a polymer.

JP 11284041 does not disclose this feature. Rather, JP 11284041 discloses "a lubricant layer in an inner surface of a path in which a wire passes" (See abstract).

Likewise, GB 2,165,178 does not disclose the above-recited feature of claim 1. GB 2,165,178 discloses film 53 on the end of capillary 13A (See Figure 9). Film 53 is not a polymer. Rather, the films disclosed in GB 2,165,178 are carbides (e.g., carbides of elements in groups IV, V, and VI) or nitrides (e.g., BN or SiN) (See page 5, lines 16-31 and page 6, lines 32-47).

JP 11284041 provides that "[f]ormation of a lubricant layer in an inner surface of a path in which a wire passes eliminates the need for applying lubricant to a wire surface . . ." (See abstract). Applying such a lubricant layer to the exterior surface of the tip portion of a capillary would not further the purpose of eliminating the lubricant to the wire surface. Thus, there would be no motivation to combine JP 11284041 with GB 2,165,178.

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Applicants respectfully submit that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher M. Spletzer, Sr., Reg. No. 52,240  
Attorney for Applicants

CMS/tmb

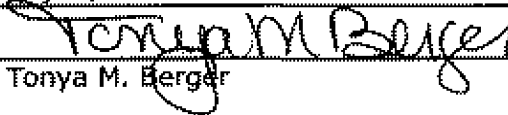
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Kulicke and Soffa Industries, Inc.  
1005 Virginia Drive  
Fort Washington, PA 19034

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May 30, 2006



Tonya M. Berger